

President's Report for 2007

Another year has once again passed us by with everyone just as busy as always. We recognise how very involved our teachers are and it is always nice to offer them some respite in their busy lives with what we believe has been some excellent PD this past year. As a council we have achieved some amazing things over the past year. We continue to grow membership numbers and as a committee we have been tireless in delivering an awe inspiring line-up of workshops for local teachers and educators alike. Many thanks go to all of my committee members for the many hours and tireless energy they put into the programme. Having sub committees shares the load for all.

Events for the year were:

1. AGM with guest speaker Julia Marshall from Gecko Press February

Publisher Julia Marshall from Gecko Press spoke to our AGM. She explained how Gecko was set up to exploit a niche in the New Zealand publishing market, specialising in English versions of 'curiously good books' from around the world. Julia chooses books written by the world's best authors, which have won awards and have a strong 'heart factor'.

Four Gecko Press authors and illustrators are on the nominee list for the Astrid Lindgren award 2008, which will be announced in March.

Nominees with books published by Gecko Press include illustrators Eva Eriksson (All the Dear Little Animals) and Anna Höglund (Elfrida), and authors Elf Stark (My Friend Percy's Magical Gym Shoes) and Jutta Bauer (Selma). Nominated for NZ Post Book Awards Joy Cowley (Snake and Lizard)

2. Beginning teacher workshops – March

Our ever popular beginning teacher workshop was offered once again this year. The focus being; **Beginning teachers sharing their practice with beginning teachers.** In past years we have had a number of teachers returning to teaching and those teachers who just enjoy a refresher course attending as well. This year we specifically targeted those teachers new to teaching. Our presenters, beginning teachers from New Entrants through to Years 7/8 from both urban and rural schools, shared how they set up their literacy programmes and how they work. As with all our workshops, practical ideas and good resources to take back to the classroom is always the main focus and this year was

no exception with teachers able to take away practical ideas to incorporate into their literacy programmes.

3. Regional Kids Literacy Quiz – 25th May

This was the 6th year of the Kids lit quiz held again at Arena 3 with 23 schools and 43 teams competing. This was the first year without the major sponsorship of Paperplus, however despite several additional expenses for the Reading Association the quality and success of the event remains undisputed. It is thanks to the keen supporters who turn up on the day and who willingly fall into the assigned roles that mark the occasion as an extra success. Particular thanks go to Judy Aitken, Margot Mackie, Jan Watts and Julie Walkely who have been on the organising team since inception and Corinna Barrow (RGD Recovery Office Asst.) who contributes most to the year by year organisation. The event ran for approximately 3 hours with the morning session being the preferred option for a large number of schools. The feedback has been very positive and we will continue to offer this event in the future.

4. Motivating reluctant writers day workshop – 23rd August

As with previous years this event proved a winner, however, with a different 'slant' to it this year. Instead of targeting our successful writers we offered an opportunity for 2 year 5-6 writers who could write but felt reluctant to do so and a teacher to join us for the day at Massey University Centre for Educational Development. They were able to work with Teresa Francis from Strategix Consulting. Teresa has presented in schools and at national conferences, and had developed the session especially for this day, integrating her knowledge of the characteristics of engaged writers, Costa and Kallick's 16 Habits of Mind and her skills as a book artist. The students used a number of tools, techniques and practical ideas. Feedback from both teachers and students alike were very positive with comments such as 'Best PD for a long time – I can use this in my classroom immediately' 'I feel freshly inspired to run motivating language and writing lessons. Instant purpose and motivation for any writing'. (teachers comments) 'I'm looking forward to my writing' Lots of fun – Cool!' 'We learnt heaps, had fun and we can't wait to teach others' 'Not enough writing!' (student comments) One of the organisers commented; 'It was fascinating to note the teachers who gave their students the chance to write or dictate their own evaluation statements'

5. Teachers' whopper writing whammy and Book Sale - September

Book Sale - our grab a bag of books sale was very successful and raised \$322 dollars. The money will be used to sponsor books for babies born during the month of April 2008.

Following the book sale was the **Writing Whammy workshop** where a variety of teachers and advisers from our region shared good practice and practical ideas.

5. World Literacy day and Book Month

Books for Babies: For the second year in a row we have purchased 175 copies of The Hungry Caterpillar books and gifted these to babies born during the month of September in celebration of World literacy Day and Book Month. This initiative has been very well received by families and the local hospital and has given us another profile in the community.

6. Feilding Frolics; A celebration of good things in Literacy – 8th November

Members were entertained in the Feilding public library by Jan Watts (Library adviser) reading 'Norman and Brenda' by Colin Thompson. We then travelled to a local school where our first presenter (principal) informed us about the programme that runs in their school for hooking boys into reading using picture books. Another local initiative was shared by a second principal presenter on establishing community penpals through authentic writing. The aim of the programme was to engage children in the writing/ reading process. "We want them to see writing and reading as rewarding and informative". The writing was in the form of letters. Another literacy success – Brat packs was also shared by teachers from Mt Biggs School. The afternoon concluded with dinner out at a local restaurant where members continued to talk and share ideas in a relaxed setting.

Behind the Scenes

1. NZRA National Conference in New Plymouth – September
 - *Literacy Leadership Workshop* – Our council continues to encourage our members to attend this session.
 - *Sponsorship of Young Teacher* – Kathleen Bradley from North St School Feilding received this award this year and our local council matched it with a sponsorship for registration costs that went to Penny Horton from Waituna West. As this year's

conference was in New Plymouth, Taranaki, many of our members took advantage of attending and supporting our neighbouring councils. We look forward to hearing Kathleen's presentation as a beginning teacher attending her first conference.

- **Books for Oceana; - Nuie** The Council was delighted to donate \$200 towards fiction and non fiction books for schools in Nuie . This was generously matched of equal value by Scholastic books. At the conclusion of conference almost \$6000 worth of books had been donated.

2. **Honour Council** – We are well on our way to achieving Honour Council Status next year. Debbie Trail and Sonia Mudgway are working hard behind the scenes to collate and organise data, fliers and examples of the fabulous things our association have been involved in, in the Manawatu. Alongside this, Toni Bradley (a Past President of MRA) is creating a scrapbook with mementos of Manawatu Reading Association events from the past and present.

3. **NZRA National Website – nzra.org.nz**

The honour council subcommittee are enthused and chomping at the bit to get information and pictures about what we have been up to in our area to this website. Please visit it and give us feedback on what you see there as well as what you would like to see there.

4. **Expansion of Membership**

Our membership continues to grow and we are very encouraged by this. We are supporting our sister council in Wanganui .

5. **End of Year** - the committee celebrated another successful year by indulging in pizza, plonk and pampering.

In closing...

I would like to once again thank a number of people: Firstly our committee for all their hard work this year; secondly, the local schools and teachers who have shared their expertise throughout the year in many ways and, last but by no means the least, all our school and individual members for supporting our efforts to bring you the best in effective literacy practice. Without your support and membership we would not be the flourishing council we are. Have

a wonderful break and I look forward to seeing many of you at our exciting events for 2008.

Jude Weavers

President

Manawatu Reading Association